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ABSTRACT

This ERIC FAST Bib presents annotations concerning four major areas related to workplace literacy: (1) the definition and design of curriculum; (2) trends, issues, and challenges in workplace literacy; (3) model programs and projects; and (4) reference materials for practitioners. Contents include annotations of 45 journal articles, conference papers and other ERIC publications published between 1989 and 1992. (RS)

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WORKPLACE LITERACY: An Update

by Jerry Johns and Barbara S. Abromitis

The need for a literate and versatile workforce has never been more acutely felt than in today's competitive world market. Employers, unions, literacy educators, government officials, and employees themselves must be involved in workplace literacy initiatives for real success to take place.

This ERIC *FAST Bib* lists citations concerning four major areas related to workplace literacy: 1) the definition and design of curriculum, 2) trends, issues, and challenges in workplace literacy, 3) model programs and projects, and 4) reference materials for practitioners.

Two types of citations are provided in this bibliography: ERIC documents and journal articles.

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Definition and Design of Curriculum

Askov, Eunice N. "Curriculum Design for Workplace Literacy," *Adult Learning*, v3 n8 p12-13 Jun 1992.

Supports the need for adult basic educators to design and implement retraining programs at the worksite. Provides suggestions for designing custom-made basic skills instruction using work-related materials.

Greenberg, Eric Rolfe. "Some Pointers on Basic Training Techniques," *Personnel*, v66 n9 p22-24, 26 Sep 1989.

Includes thoughts and comments by three experts in the field of basic skills training on giving employees and/or job applicants proficiency tests and, when necessary, remedial training in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Knell, Suzanne. "Workplace Literacy: What It Is—And What Voc Ed Can Do about It," *Vocational Education Journal*, v65 n6 p22-23, 79 Oct 1990.

Emphasizes the need for vocational educators to collaborate with business and industry in literacy program development. Recommends advocating policy changes that integrate basic skills into vocational education curricula.

Lewe, Glenda. "The Need for Workplace Literacy Partnerships." Position paper, Ontario, Canada, 1990. 17 p. [ED 327 643]

Predicts that most successful workplace literacy programs will be based on a partnership model involving companies, unions, and educators. Discusses barriers to developing a workplace literacy program.

Ley, Kathryn and others. "Local Needs Assessment for Workplace Literacy Programs," *Adult Learning*, v3 n8 p15-16 Jun 1992.

Describes a community-based needs assessment as a means of addressing workplace illiteracy. Lists criteria for increasing the effectiveness of the assessment.

Lund, Leonard and McGuire, Patrick E. *Literacy in the Work Force. Report Number 947*. New York, NY: Conference Board, Inc., 1990. 24 p. [ED 330 894]

Reports results of a survey taken of manufacturing and service firms. Suggests goals for a business literacy agenda.

Sticht, Thomas G. *Evaluating National Workplace Literacy Programs*. San Diego, CA: Applied Behavioral & Cognitive Sciences, Inc., 1991. 13 p. [ED 334 431]

Discusses evaluation of workplace literacy programs as specified by the U.S. Department of Education. Outlines criteria for a well-designed and operated workplace literacy program.

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Stratman, James F. and Duffy, Thomas M. "Conceptualizing Research on Written Management Communication: Looking through a Glass Onion," *Management Communication Quarterly*, v3 n4 p429-51 May 1990.

Provides a conceptual overview of four studies on management writing included in the issue. Relates research on written management communication to evolving conceptions of workplace literacy. Argues for a stronger emphasis on innovative methods of directing organizational attention to managers' writing as both process and product.

Taylor, Maurice C. and others. "Workplace Basic Skills Training: A Viewpoint from Business, Labour, and Education," *Learning (Canada)*, v6 n1 p12-16 1992.

Discusses the following topics: the need for a consumer's guide to workplace literacy, labor's stake in literacy, educators' negotiations with businesses in providing services, and program evaluation in Canada and the United States.

Toward a New Definition of Employability. Report by the North Central Indiana Workforce Literacy Task Force. Position paper, Washington, D.C., 1992. 33 p. [ED 344 987]

Describes six key changes expected for the workplace and seven minimal entry-level competency areas. Includes references to the six national educational goals and a strategy for achieving them.

Trends, Issues and Challenges

Archer, Katherine. "Workplace English as a Second Language Program: Company Supervisors' Role," *Adult Learning*, v3 n8 p9-11, 14 Jun 1992.

Examines the need for supervisors to be involved with and supportive of Workplace English as a Second Language programs.

Business Council for Effective Literacy. "Standardized Tests: Their Use and Misuse," *BCEL Newsletter for the Business Community*, n22 p1, 6-9 Jan 1990. [ED 314 636]

Explains the use and misuse of standardized tests in adult literacy programs. Discusses the recent movement toward nonstandardized assessments in adult basic education.

Business Council for Effective Literacy. "Talking Heads: Issues and Challenges in Adult Literacy," *BCEL Newsletter for the Business & Literacy Communities*, n30 p1, 6-7, 16 Jan 1992. [ED 340 879]

Includes interviews with thirteen national leaders and their discussions of pertinent adult education issues.

Education Writers Association. "Myth #15: Management and Labor Agree on Literacy Goals," *Literacy Beat*, v4 n3 Aug 1991. 5 p. [ED 336 547]

Explores the different approaches to workplace literacy taken by unions and management. Describes successful programs conducted by unions.

Imel, Susan. "Workplace Literacy: An Update. Trends, and Issues Alerts." ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH, 1992. 3 p. [ED 346 321]

Describes issues related to two areas of workplace literacy: a prevailing attitude that workers are deficient or lacking in basic skills; and the development and implementation of curriculum, assessment, and evaluation.

Is the Story Literacy, Decent Jobs, or Political Will? A Reporter's Guide to Emerging Adult Literacy Issues. Education Writers Association, Washington, D.C., 1991. 56 p. [ED 337 708]

Contains six reports addressing these issues which affect workplace literacy: welfare reform, the success or failure of literacy programs, training for 'slave labor,' adjusting to higher skills, language barriers, and 'falling through the cracks' in the system. Presents conclusions based on studies done in various areas of the country.

Jurmo, Paul. "Good News and Bad News about Workplace Literacy Efforts in the United States." Keynote address presented at the Job Training Partnership Act Workplace Literacy Forum, San Antonio, TX, May, 1991. 11 p. [ED 340 845]

Includes evidence of the following areas of strength: a higher awareness of the need for literacy programs; more contextual curriculla; increased collaboration between educators, unions, and management; more staff training; better evaluation techniques; and increased funding. Describes areas of weakness in workplace literacy programs, and suggests strategies employers can use to correct the situation.

Leslie, Bruce. "Skill Standards and Certification Issues." Testimony delivered to the Department of Labor, Department of Education, and National Advisory Commission on Work-Based Learning on behalf of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Apr 1992. 12 p. [ED 343 640]

Lists the fundamental educational standards necessary for the U.S. workforce to be competitive. Suggests that these skills should be the base of a more flexible set of standards that would permit greater transferability of community college credits for an increasingly mobile workforce.

Mikulecky, Larry. "Basic Skills Impediments to Communication between Management and Hourly Employees," *Management Communication Quarterly*, v3 n4 p452-73 May 1990.

Examines increased print communication demands in business organizations. Identifies three employee needs for management consideration.

Yaffe, Jerry. "Workforce Literacy in the Local Public Sector," *Public Personnel Management*, v21 n2 p227-60 Sum 1992.

Examines the demographic and workplace trends experienced by the largest county government in the U.S.: Los Angeles County. Describes the unique challenges presented by its diverse, multilingual population.

Model Programs and Projects

Barnett, Lynn, Ed. "Rural Workplace Literacy: Community College Partnerships." American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C., 1991. 22 p. [ED 338 300]

Describes ten grant-funded programs from around the country that are designed to raise the awareness of linkages between local economic development and basic skill performance.

Breeden, Kenneth H. and Bowen, Jean S. "Building Literate Communities: Georgia's Blueprint for Success," *Vocational Education Journal*, v65 n6 p24-25, 81 Oct 1990.

Outlines Georgia's state-supported, community-based Certified Literate Community Program. Claims that the program provides all levels of instruction to adults at all educational levels.

Business Council for Effective Literacy. "The Missing Link: Workplace Education in Small Business," *BCEL Newsletter for the Business & Literacy Communities*, n32 p1, 6-9 Jul 1992. [ED 347 329]

Explores the reasons small businesses invest or do not invest in basic skills instruction for their workers. Determines typical offerings and expenditures by small businesses.

Carr, Kathryn S. "Literacy in the Workplace: A Whole Language Approach." Project description, Missouri, 1990. 40 p. [ED 324 441]

Illustrates the design and implementation of a whole language approach to workplace literacy. Project conducted with the help of Central Missouri State University.

Conroy, William. "SER Works to Close Literacy-Productivity Gap," *SERAmerica*, p7-8 Win 1989.

Describes a workplace literacy program designed by Milwaukee SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. which enabled the participating company to upgrade its employees' basic skills, increase productivity, and eliminate the need for layoffs.

Kutner, Mark A. and others. *A Review of the National Workplace Literacy Program*. Pelavin Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C. , 1991. 77 p. [ED 333 199]

Examines projects funded during the first year of operation of the National Workplace Literacy Program. Includes a review of research literature and analyses of data and site visits. Outlines successful elements of workplace literacy programs. Recommends required data collection, longer grant periods, better dissemination of information, more effective evaluation, and the development of instruments to assess participant literacy levels.

Nore, Gordon. "Peer Tutoring in Vocational Literacy Skills," *TESL Canada Journal*, v7 n2 p66-74 Mar 1990.

Presents an overview of the first year's operation of "Learning in the Workplace," a project designed to develop industry-specific training materials and model programs with a peer tutoring component.

Soifer, Rena and others. "The Academy: A Learner-Centered Workplace Literacy Program," *New Directions for Continuing Education*, n42 p65-72 Sum 1989.

Emphasizes the need for literacy educators to learn about the work and lives of industrial workers. Describes the Academy at Eastern Michigan University as an alternative, collaborative form of adult education.

Stein, Sondra G. "Tradition and Change: The Role of Workplace Education in the Transformation of the Workplace." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Montreal, Quebec, 1991. 30 p. [ED 345 103]

Describes the basic skills program at United Electric Controls (UEC) which led the company to increase its productivity and profitability and to eventually win the North American Shingo Prize for Quality in Manufacturing. Reports higher worker self-esteem and increased input from workers in streamlining work processes.

Westberry, Susan. *The BEST Blueprint. Quality ABE in the Workplace*. Maury County Board of Education, Columbia, TN, 1990. 82 p. [ED 324 427]

Describes a workplace literacy demonstration model designed to provide adult basic education services for multiple employers. Focuses on job-related instruction, increasing safety, productivity, and employee morale.

Reference Materials for Practitioners

Askov, Eunice N. and others. "Decision-Making in Workplace Literacy," *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, v13 n1 p34-40 1989.

Outlines steps in developing a workplace literacy partnership.

Barker, Kathryn Chang. *A Program Evaluation Handbook for Workplace Literacy = Guide d'evaluation de programme pour l'alphabetisation en milieu de travail*. National Literacy Secretariat, Ontario, Canada, 1991. 108 p. [ED 339 917]

Provides various options and processes that can be used for formal evaluation of workplace literacy programs.

Business Council for Effective Literacy. "Workforce & Workplace Literacy. Selected References." *BCL Brief*, n1 Jan 10 1992. 7 p. [ED 344 075]

Includes ten how-to guides and assessment tools, fifteen policy and research reports, and four surveys.

Cichon, Donald J. and others. *Industry-Based Bilingual Vocational Training: A Review of Related Literature*. Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Washington, D.C., 1990. 103 p. [ED 317 772]

Examines the major issues involved in helping private business and industry face the challenge of effectively training employees with limited English proficiency.

Designing and Implementing Workforce Literacy: Programs in Partnership with Business and Industry. Handbook for Community Colleges and Technical Institutes in Texas. Texas Workforce Literacy Consortium, Austin, TX, 1991. 265 p. [ED 344 006]

Presents research findings from recent workforce literacy programs and resources for community colleges and technical institute personnel to use in forming partnerships with business and industry.

Dole, Elizabeth. "America's Competitive Advantage: A Skilled Work Force," *Adult Learning*, v1 n1 p12-14 Sept 1989.

Outlines the roles of the essential partners in work-force development: employers, unions, educational institutions, and government.

Fowler, Robert. "How to Build a Successful Program in the Workplace: A Business Perspective," *Adult Learning*, v3 n8 p17-18 Jun 1992.

Describes a successful workplace literacy program necessitated by increased skill requirements of employees. Discusses mistakes as well as good decisions.

Nurss, Joanne R. and Chase, Nancy D. "Workplace Literacy: A Tool for Recruitment," *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, v13 n1 p16-23 1989.

Considers the essential elements in successful workplace literacy programs that recruit and retain workers who might not otherwise participate.

Sarmiento, Anthony R. and Kay, Ann. *Worker-Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy.*. American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, Washington, D.C., 1990. 132 p. [ED 338 863]

Examines organized labor's views on adult literacy. Describes several union-sponsored workplace education programs and suggests how a union can plan and operate a worker-centered literacy program. Lists members of the technical resource group involved in developing the guide, outside funding resources, additional books and articles, and labor organizations whose programs are mentioned in the guide.

Workplace Literacy Analysis for Adults with Special Learning Needs. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, San Diego, CA, Oct 1991. 60 p. [ED 343 009]

Includes analysis tools that assist educators and employers in identifying the basic skill competencies required for adults with special learning needs who enter vocational training and/or employment programs.

Related ERIC/RCS Publications

Books

Adult Literacy: Contexts and Challenges, by Anabel Powell Newman and Caroline Beverstock. Co-published with the International Reading Association, 1990. Surveys the history of the adult literacy movement, reviews the research, details the organized efforts, renews the challenges, and defines adult literacy as "a new American value." (G12; $10.50)

Adult Literacies: Intersections with Elementary and Secondary Education, by Caroline Beverstock and Anabel P. Newman. Co-published with Phi Delta Kappa, 1991. Part of PDK's Hot Topics series, this is an anthology of the best readings written by the top thinkers in the fields of workplace literacy, adult literacy, literacy research, intergenerational and family literacy, and the points at which these literacies connect with school education. (G21; $20.00)

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